



The California HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

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In Memoriam



*“...In the
Line of Duty”*



Larry J. Jaramillo
I.D. 11663
CHP Officer and Pilot
1951 – 1993

OCT 93

Weaverville CA 96093



Santa Cruz Island:

A Vacation Paradise

*Written and photographed
by Gordon Ting*

owlarks replace alarm clocks and time and space are yours to enjoy. Some people call this paradise "our island continent."

Santa Cruz Island lies 23 miles off California's bustling Gold Coast and is the largest of the eight Channel Islands. Stretching 24 miles long and seven miles wide, its shoreline has 77 miles of dramatic cliffs, shimmering tide pools, shel-

tered coves and pristine beaches. Whales, dolphins, sea lions and sea otters swim its waters and bask on its beaches. Over 50 species of birds breed here, including blue herons and the endangered brown pelican.

The island also supports 600 species of native plants, eight of which are found nowhere else on Earth. Geologically, it has everything from volcanic rock to diatomaceous

earth (filter material for swimming pools).

For more than 6,000 years, the Chumash Indians inhabited this island they called "Limu." In fact, over 1,000 of them were occupying Santa Cruz when Cabrillo claimed the island for Spain in 1542.

In 1839, after all the Indians had been relocated to mainland missions, one Andres Castillero started



The Chumash Indians claim they were created on Santa Cruz Island by Hutash, the Earth goddess. When the island became too crowded, legend says, Hutash stretched a rainbow bridge from the island's highest peak to the mountains near Carpinteria and told her people to cross over to the empty mainland.

As they crossed, some of the In-

dians looked down into the swirling mist and waves, became dizzy and fell into the ocean. Not wanting them to drown, Hutash turned them into dolphins, which is why the Chumash say dolphins are their brothers.

Today, you can re-cross the rainbow bridge to a natural wonderland far away from the mainstream tourist trade, a place where mead-



Santa Cruz Island is the largest island in Channel Islands National Park. Twenty-four miles long, with mountains 2,400 feet high and 54,000 unspoiled acres of land, it's been called a miniature continent.



Christy Ranch (Casa Vieja)



A full 77 miles of dramatic cliffs, pristine beaches, hiking trails and tidepools entice visitors from all over the world to escape the stresses of modern-day life and enjoy a real vacation on this island paradise.

a ranch on the island. In 1880, Justinian Caire took it over and set up a French/Italian colony in which he raised cattle and sheep and produced walnuts, olives, honey, almonds and a fine Santa Cruz Island-label wine.

From 1913 to 1937, Ira and Margaret Eaton operated a visitors camp at Pelican Bay on the north shore.

During this time, the island was discovered by filmmakers, and Santa Cruz soon became a popular location for movies. The Eatons graciously hosted the Flying A, Fox and Paramount studios, along with celebrities like Gloria Swanson, John Barrymore, Tom Mix, Ronald Coleman, Anna May Wong and Cecil B. deMille.

Today, Santa Cruz is a private inholding within the Channel Islands National Park and Marine Sanctuary. The Nature Conservancy — a national, non-profit, membership conservation organi-

zation — owns and oversees the western 90 percent, while the Gherini family owns the rest.

Both portions of the island are open to the public, by special arrangement only, for recreation and hunting. Visitors have included senior citizens groups, bird watchers from New Zealand, Saudi Arabian businessmen and thousands of schoolchildren.

Recreation Packages West End

Several times a year, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History offers three-day nature-oriented vacation packages to the Nature Conservancy-held western portion of Santa Cruz. Guests board a twin-engine Britten Norman Islander equipped with STOL (short



***Virtually untouched by the 20th century
and unknown to most Californians,
Santa Cruz Island's natural treasures include
600 species of plants — eight of which are found
nowhere else — and 130 types of birds.***

takeoff and landing) capabilities in Camarillo, and a 20-minute flight puts them at the Christy Ranch (Casa Vieja) near the western end of the island.

The cozy adobe buildings here date from the 1860s and offer clean and comfortable rooms. The entire resort complex currently serves up to 20 guests.

The museum provides knowledgeable guides, all food and drinks, and land excursions. Museum personnel specialize in arranging trips for groups, but open trips for individuals and families also are available. Total price for this package is \$450 per person. Single-day airplane tours from the mainland are also available for \$160 per person.

With 54,000 unspoiled acres and no fixed itinerary, recreation possibilities are almost endless.

One popular destination is

Forney's Cove, a broad sweep of sand at the western tip of Santa Cruz Island. Reached by four-wheel-drive, it's truly a beachcomber's delight. The tide pools here are 10 times richer than those on the mainland, and harbor seals playfully peer at you while you swim or snorkel, poking their heads above the waves like living periscopes.

"It's the biggest playground you ever saw in your life," says guide Greg Russel.

Willows Cove is a sheltered inlet on the south shore that could be



Christy Beach

right out of the pages of "Treasure Island" or off a travel poster for Ixtapa. It's famous not only for its crescent-shaped beach but also for the many Indian caves on its surrounding hillsides. Island guides will gladly take you on a trek to explore some of them, and everybody gets to play "Indiana Jones" for a while.

Another visitor favorite is the drive along high ridge lines and



The "yacht club" at Forney's Cove



through Sierra-like pine forests. At one point, there's an astonishing view of Picacho Diablo (at 2,450 feet, the tallest mountain on the Channel Islands) on one side and Sierra Blanca (a desolate white mountain) on the other.

From a high vantage point, you can spot dolphins feeding in the ocean. Somewhere far beyond them lies tiny San Nicolas Island, where the true story of one Indian

woman's courage inspired the successful book and subsequent movie, "Island of the Blue Dolphin."

But history and beaches aren't the only attractions on Santa Cruz Island. Inland there are quail, wild pigs, red-tailed hawks and peregrine falcons. These are the real residents of the island and, fortunately, they don't seem to mind the steady stream of human visitors.

Recreation Packages East End

Island Packers of Ventura offers

year-round day and overnight travel packages to the Gherini property. Visitors to this part of the island travel by boat to Scorpion Ranch. Day trips cost \$42 per person and include boat transportation, island access fee and a guided hike. Overnight camping is \$25 per night in designated camp sites. This includes island access fee and limited guide service. Round-trip transportation is \$55.

Overnight stays at Scorpion Ranch include rustic sleeping accommodations, the use of kitchen facilities, a guide for island activities and the island access fee. The cost is \$50 per night, with round-trip boat transportation costing another \$55.

The main ranch house can sleep up to 12 visitors in six individual rooms, but can accommodate up to 22 in bunks. The management is

happy to make special arrangements for larger groups. All you need to bring is your own bedding, personal gear and food and drinking water.

Day guests receive an orientation and are led on a scenic hike up to a high bluff with spectacular views of the Channel and three Anacapa islands.

Overnight guests can take advantage of several hiking trails. A 1.5-mile trek up a canyon behind the ranch leads to the Potato Harbor overlook, where you can view dramatic sea caves and sea lions basking in the warm sun. A longer route takes you up to a high ridge with an absolutely breathtaking panorama.

Sheep and boar are common sights and there is even a herd of horses that roam free. Ravens, kestrel and killdeer soar overhead. In the evening and early morning, the famous island fox often makes an appearance. You might spot a beautiful fox foraging for food along any one of the roadways. Smaller than their mainland cousins and also more docile, the animal will check you out with more curiosity than fear before going back to foraging.

Then there's Duane Owens, Scorpion Ranch's caretaker and park ranger. A retired school principal, Duane single-handedly maintains the roads in the rugged country around the ranch. He's the only full-time resident on Santa Cruz Island and a most gracious host.

A walking encyclopedia about the island, Owens gladly points visitors to the best trails and scenic spots, and entertains guests with fascinating stories about the island. He is also a master artist, and his exquisite wood carvings of wildlife have been featured in numerous newspapers.

Hunting Packages

Because the island is part of a national park, all native animals, such as the fox, are protected. Sheep and boar, which were introduced to the island during its ranching heyday, are not native and can be hunted as part of the animal population control program.

Hunting packages for the eastern end of Santa Cruz are available year-round from Island Adventures. This company is owned by Jaret Owens (Duane's son).

Jaret's company flies hunting parties to a ranch house at Smuggler's Cove, about four miles from Scorpion Ranch. From there, hunters spread out on foot over the canyons and hills to stalk their quarry.

Rams as well as feral boar are hunted here, and hunters frequently encounter rams with full curl to curl-and-a-half horns. Game limits are set at one trophy ram, one mature boar with tusks, and one meat sheep. Hunts last up to three days and prices include airfare and meals.

The National Parks Service (NPS)

plans on purchasing the east end of Santa Cruz Island in the near future. One of their first priorities will be to eradicate the sheep. The Nature Conservancy has already successfully done this on the western portion of the island.


If NPS agrees, the sheep and hogs may be eliminated through the hunting program. However, this remains up in the air as of summer 1993.

Nightlife

There are no nightclubs or movie houses here. But whether you're a hunter or a vacationer, Santa Cruz Island after dark offers some of the best stargazing and storytelling sessions anywhere.

Look north and you'll see Sky Coyote (Polaris); circling it are the Seven Brothers. According to Chumash legend, these were once seven boys who learned to fly and flew so far north they became the star formation we call the Big Dipper or Great Bear.

Look south, and there lurks Scorpion Woman (Scorpius), menacing souls on the way to their final resting place. Scattered around their orbits are Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. Winding through it all is Hutash's husband, Sky Snake (the Milky Way).

"Everybody has that one thing that calls them back," Greg Russel says. Well, you don't find an island paradise in your own back yard everyday, especially one at the end of a rainbow bridge. 

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